

THE BETTER HEALTH NEWS

SUGAR AND INSULIN CAUSE PROBLEMS

SUGAR & INSULIN

TIME TO DIET? MAYBE NOT

2

DOES SUGAR MAKE YOU STUPID?

4

TAKE A FREE HEALTH QUESTIONNAIRE

5

METABOLIC SYNDROME

6

Americans currently spend \$25 billion each year on cholesterol lowering medication. One cause of high cholesterol is eating sugar and refined carbohydrates. Eating sweets and starch causes the body to produce insulin. If the consumption of refined food is excessive and habitual, the body becomes less responsive to the insulin—a condition known as “insulin resistance”. The body produces more and more insulin, but responds to it less.

Excess insulin production causes a variety of problems. For one thing, insulin causes the body to store calories. If you want to lose weight, you have to get insulin production under control. This means avoiding sweets and starch.

Insulin resistance can also lead to high cholesterol. The pattern is typically high triglycerides and LDL (bad) cholesterol and low HDL (good) cholesterol is low. This is a situation

known as the metabolic syndrome, or syndrome X. It is often accompanied by high blood pressure. It is interesting to note that cholesterol lowering drugs

work by suppressing the enzyme HMG CoA reductase in the liver. That enzyme is actually stimulated by insulin production.

Another thing that few people realize is that eating refined sugar actually contributes to inflammation. So if you are recovering from an injury or are in pain, eating sugar and refined carbohydrate will contribute to your suffering.

Insulin resistance can eventually lead to Type 2 diabetes. In Type 2 diabetes the body makes plenty of insulin, it just does not respond to it, so the blood sugar increases. Refined food and excess insulin production can really undermine your health.



TIME TO DIET? MAYBE NOT

In 1919, Dr. Lulu Hunt Peters wrote the book *Diet and Health*. In it she presented the concept of counting calories. A calorie is a measurement of energy (much like the BTU used to rate furnaces). In nutrition, it is the amount of heat required to raise the temperature of one liter of water one degree centigrade. A pound of fat contains 3,500 calories. Dr. Peters suggested a diet of 1,200 calories per day for weight loss and 15 calories per pound per day for weight maintenance. Ever since then, we have been trying to lose weight by reducing calories (or fat grams, or carbohydrates). The problem with that is the fact that your fat cells produce a hormone, called leptin. Leptin, from your fat cells circulates in the blood and is perceived by the brain. If you reduce calories and lose weight too quickly, the amount of leptin drastically decreases and your brain perceives that as starvation. So dieting can actually make you fatter.

Did you ever go on a diet and have perfect control, lose weight and feel great? After a bit of time, did you find that you "fell off the wagon", and even reasonable self-control seemed impossible? It was not due to a lack of will power, it was a survival mechanism. The drop in leptin told

your brain that the body was starving. This is why people rebound and gain weight after a diet.

You can still lose weight, but you must do it slowly and without denying yourself food. Actually, if you really want to lose weight, what you eat, how you eat and when you eat are much more important than how much you eat. You want to naturally control your appetite and gradually lose the weight.

Your largest meal should be breakfast and it should contain protein. Lunch should be your second largest meal and dinner should be your smallest meal. This eating pattern will help you to produce a hormone called glucagon. Glucagon works to provide your body with calories by breaking down fat.

Avoid additives, hydrogenated oils, and artificial sweeteners. Artificial additives, processed foods and food not found in nature actually triggers a signal in your brain to cause overeating.

Avoid white refined sugar, high fructose corn syrup and refined grains. Sugar and

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empty starch cause you to produce insulin. Insulin works to store calories. Furthermore, eating sugar and starch will lead to craving more sugar and starch later.

Eat slowly. Put your fork down between bites and chew your food until it is liquid. Eating slowly will not only improve your digestion, it will allow you to be satisfied with less food.

Control stress. Stress causes you to hold on to weight and to crave high-calorie foods.

Exercise, but not too hard. Heavy workouts make you produce hormones that are related to stress. Light workouts burn some calories and can actually help to reduce stress.

Taking the right kind of fat can actually help you to lose weight. Omega-3 fatty acids, like those found in fish oil, can help reduce inflammation, improve your endocrine function, and help end food cravings. Consuming certain fats and oils can actually cause you to be satisfied with less food.

One other issue that may help you to lose weight is to identify any foods to which you may be sensitive and avoid them. Common culprits are gluten and dairy.

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DOES SUGAR MAKE YOU STUPID?

Research appearing in the *Journal of Physiology* (Published online before print April 2, 2012, doi: 10.1113/jphysiol.2012.230078 May 1, 2012) looked at sugar consumption in rats and how it affected their ability to learn complex tasks. In this study, scientists at UCLA conducted a five-day training session, teaching the rats how to navigate a complicated maze.

After the training session, the rats were divided into two groups. One group was given an omega-3 fatty acid mixture containing flaxseed oil and DHA, the other group was not. For six weeks, both groups of rats were fed a solution containing high fructose corn syrup instead of water.

At the end of the six weeks, the rats were then given the opportunity to navigate the maze. "The DHA-deprived animals were slower, and their brains showed a decline in synaptic activity," said Fernando Gomez-Pinilla, a professor of neurosurgery at the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA. "Their brain cells had trouble signaling each other, disrupting the rats' ability to think clearly and recall the route they'd learned six weeks earlier."

Sugar consumption interfered with the regulation of how the cells use and store sugar (insulin resistance). Because of the problems with sugar and cellular energy production, the rats' brain function was affected.

Examination of the brains of the rats not fed the omega-3/DHA supplement revealed signs of insulin insensitivity.

The study showed that high-fructose corn

syrup harms the brain as well as the body. Supplementation with omega-3 fatty acids seems to offer some protection from the damage done by sugar consumption.

"Our findings illustrate that what

you eat affects how you think," said Gomez-Pinilla. "Eating a high-fructose diet over the long term alters your brain's ability to learn and remember information. But adding omega-3 fatty acids to your meals can help minimize the damage."

If patients have a problem giving up sugar, you would be doing them a great service by supplementing them with an omega-3 supplement.



**I saw few die of
hunger; of
eating, a
hundred
thousand.**

**Benjamin
Franklin**

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METABOLIC SYNDROME

Consumption of sugar and insulin resistance go beyond the obvious problems of obesity, diabetes and high cholesterol. Sugar is also linked to fatigue, high blood pressure, fatty liver, atherosclerosis, yeast overgrowth, magnesium loss, acidic pH, calcium/phosphorus imbalance, polycystic ovary disease, endocrine problems, a systemic inflammatory state, impaired fibrinolysis and pro coagulation, and an environment that favors neoplastic (cancer) growth.

The average American consumes nearly 200 pounds of refined sugar each year, and we get half of our calories from refined carbohydrates. This creates vitamin deficiency and insulin insensitivity. Other factors that contribute to the metabolic syndrome include stress, poor sleep habits, lack of exercise, and exposure to toxins.

Our blood sugar is controlled by insulin and glucagon. The excessive consumption of sugar and refined carbohydrates causes the body to become less sensitive to insulin—a condition that will lead to the metabolic

syndrome or syndrome X, and can eventually lead to type-2 diabetes.

According to the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, Syndrome X is present if these three things are present:

- Waist measurement greater than 40 inches in men or 35 inches in women
- Triglycerides greater than 150 mg/dl
- HDL less than 40 mg/dl in men or less than 50 mg/dl in women
- Blood pressure that is 135/85 or greater
- Fasting blood glucose of 110 mg/dl or greater

25% of all Americans have Syndrome X. It is a problem created by eating too much refined food. It can result in diabetes, high blood pressure and heart disease. Clearly getting insulin levels under control is a must, as is a low-glycemic diet.